

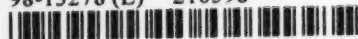
**General Assembly**

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Fifty-third session**Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period
1998-2001****Programme 27. General Assembly and Economic and Social Council
affairs and conference services**

1. The preparation, format and content of the medium-term plan and its revisions are governed by the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation.
2. Regulation 3.11 provides, *inter alia*, that the medium-term plan shall be revised as necessary every two years to incorporate required programme changes and that the proposed revisions shall be as detailed as required to incorporate the programme implications of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the intergovernmental organs or international conferences since the adoption of the plan.
3. In its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997, the General Assembly approved the Secretary-General's proposal to establish the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services.
4. A new programme is therefore proposed to subsume the related parts of the medium-term plan, which was adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/219 of 18 December 1996 and issued in document A/51/6/Rev.1 and Corr.1, which formerly constituted or were elements of subprogrammes 1.5, General Assembly affairs, and 1.6, Decolonization, of programme 1, Political affairs; subprogramme 5.1, Policy coordination and inter-agency cooperation, of programme 5, Policy coordination and sustainable development (para. 5.5 (e)); subprogramme 24.5, Conference services, of programme 24, Administrative services; and programme 26, Disarmament (parts of paras. 26.2 and 26.7).
5. No changes are proposed in the content of the plan.
6. The Committee on Conferences has approved the conference services components of this proposal.
7. The text of the new programme would read as follows.



Programme 27. General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference services

27.1 The major objectives of this programme are the servicing of the General Assembly and its General and Main Committees and various subsidiary organs, the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary and ad hoc bodies, as well as special conferences dealing with disarmament, international security, decolonization, economic, social and related matters. It also provides meeting and documentation services to all intergovernmental and expert bodies at Headquarters, and in other locations for which it is responsible, as well as other translation and publishing services.

27.2 The basic mandates for the provision of conference services are contained in the rules of procedure of the main organs of the United Nations. Additional mandates are found in the resolutions adopted regularly by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the pattern and calendar of conferences and on the control and limitation of documentation.

27.3 Overall intergovernmental direction concerning the provision of conference services is given by the General Assembly on the advice of the Committee on Conferences, in accordance with Assembly resolution 43/222 B of 21 December 1988, which established the terms of reference of the Committee.

27.4 The Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services is responsible for the implementation of this programme and for the achievement of its objectives.

Subprogramme 27.1 General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs

27.5 Subsumed under this subprogramme are elements that formerly constituted or were part of subprogrammes 1.5, General Assembly affairs, and 1.6, Decolonization, of programme 1, Political affairs; paragraph 5.5 (e) of subprogramme 5.1, Policy coordination and inter-agency cooperation, of programme 5, Policy coordination and sustainable development; and parts of paragraphs 26.2 and 26.7 of programme 26, Disarmament, of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

27.6 The major objective of this subprogramme is to ensure, through the provision of authoritative advice and technical secretariat services, the orderly and procedurally correct conduct of the meetings and other work of the General Assembly, its General, First, Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth), Second and Third Committees and the subsidiary and ad hoc bodies under the aegis of the Assembly, including the Disarmament Commission and the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean; the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary and ad hoc bodies and special conferences dealing with economic, social and related matters; the Trusteeship Council, as required; the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples; and other intergovernmental bodies in the fields of international security, economic, social and related areas, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the rules of procedures and established practices of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council.

27.7 The General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division will prepare analytical studies on the rules and procedures of the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council; conduct consultations with the Presidents and bureaux of the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council, and the presiding officers of the Main Committees and of other intergovernmental bodies, as well as with representatives of Member States in all matters relating to the work of those bodies, with particular reference to the effective scheduling and conduct of meetings.

27.8 Another objective is to provide organizational and technical secretariat support to multilateral bodies entrusted with deliberation and/or negotiations on disarmament issues, including the meetings of States parties and other international meetings related to multilateral disarmament agreements.

27.9 A further objective is to provide other technical secretariat services that formerly constituted the part of subprogramme 1.6, Decolonization, of programme 1, Political affairs, such as organizational and secretariat servicing support for regional seminars in the Caribbean and the Pacific regions, respectively, in accordance with the Plan of Action for the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism as well as for visiting missions and for the mandated activities of the Committee relating to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations; parliamentary documentation, guidelines and rules of procedure for the regional seminars; reports and procedural documentation for the regional seminars and secretariat servicing for the plenary meetings.

27.10 Under this subprogramme, the General Assembly and Economic and Social Affairs Division will also conduct research and prepare analytical studies on the application and interpretation of the provisions of the relevant articles of the Charter of the United Nations related to the activities of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary and ad hoc bodies, and the Trusteeship Council, and their rules of procedure, for inclusion in the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs*. In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 51/209 and 52/161, the Division will coordinate the production of the volume of the *Repertory* devoted to the General Assembly and will endeavour to update the *Repertory* and ensure its regular publication.

27.11 In order to facilitate the organization and conduct of the meetings of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and their subsidiary bodies, the Division will prepare the necessary parliamentary documentation and ensure the correct and duly authorized submission of reports and communications for processing as official General Assembly, Economic and Social Council or Trusteeship Council documents, as well as their timely issuance in accordance with the practice, programme of work and schedule of the Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Trusteeship Council.

27.12 The General Assembly and Economic and Social Council Affairs Division will also conduct consultations and coordinate the assignment of responsibilities for the implementation of all General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions and follow-up to ensure timely action by relevant bodies.

27.13 Another objective of the subprogramme is to provide technical advice and substantive services to subsidiary organs and various open-ended working groups that have been established by the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to consider major issues that will have significant impact on the work of the Organization.

Subprogramme 27.2 Planning, development, and coordination of conference services

27.14 The main objectives of this subprogramme will be:

- (a) To improve the global planning and coordination of conference services with rational allocation and capacity utilization of the existing conference resources;
- (b) To develop and implement such new conference-servicing policies, procedures and practices as may become necessary in view of the changing activities and requirements of the Organization, in particular through regular consultation with committees and bodies at Headquarters and other duty stations to assess their needs and through the development of a cost-accounting system;

- (c) To ensure that intergovernmental bodies, special conferences and Member States in general have access to meeting and documentation services in accordance with the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the various bodies and organs of the United Nations;
- (d) To upgrade the technological capacity in conference services in line with new developments in technology;
- (e) To ensure enforcement of regulations concerning documentation.

27.15 Relevant instruments to achieve these objectives include the preparation of the draft calendar of conferences, scheduling of meetings and documentation, provision of substantive support to the Committee on Conferences and participation in conference planning missions. Workload statistics, performance indicators and cost information will be routinely refined and provided for both Secretariat and external use (e.g. by intergovernmental bodies). Technical advice and support will be provided for the planning and introduction of technological innovations in conference services and the upgrading of existing systems.

Subprogramme 27.3 Translation and editorial services

27.16 The main objectives of this subprogramme will be:

- (a) To ensure that an appropriate mix of permanent, temporary and contractual staff and adequate technological resources are available so that documentation produced is of high quality and is issued in a timely fashion, in strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the various bodies and organs of the United Nations;
- (b) To increase the efficiency and to improve the quality of the translation and editorial services.

27.17 During the period covered by the plan, self-revision will be used within reasonable limits while safeguarding standards of quality. There will be increased reliance on contractual translation through a gradual expansion of the roster of contractors. By the end of the period, it is expected that wide access to reference and terminology databases and the electronic transmission of texts will facilitate the work of translators and editors and permit more efficient modes of work, including expanded workload-sharing among conference centres, thereby improving quality, timeliness and cost-effectiveness.

Subprogramme 27.4 Interpretation, meeting and publishing services

27.18 The main objectives will be:

- (a) To provide meeting and documentation services in a timely, efficient manner while maintaining a high standard of quality;
- (b) To ensure the timely and efficient production, distribution and storage of documents and publications in the official languages of the Organization six weeks in advance of all meetings.

27.19 To achieve these objectives, the departmental application of advanced electronic information management and communications technology will continue in order to establish an appropriate balance between printed and electronic products, to set up new electronic links in the production process, from initial submission of documents to reproduction, distribution and storage, and to develop the remote provision of interpretation and verbatim reporting services. External printing will be reduced through use of desktop publishing in all official languages and, when cost-effective, in-house reproduction capacity. The

reproduction and distribution functions will be streamlined as print runs are reduced with widespread access to electronic documents stored on optical disk and an expanded capacity for printing on demand.

C. Legislative mandates

Legislative mandates for the creation of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services

General Assembly resolutions

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| 52/12 | Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform |
| 52/220 | Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 |

Subprogramme 27.1 General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs

Relevant articles of the Charter of the United Nations

General Assembly resolutions

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| S-10/2 | Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly |
| 52/12 | Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform |
| 52/220 | Questions relating to the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 |

Subprogramme 27.2 Planning, development and coordination of conference services

General Assembly resolutions

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| 49/237 | Questions relating to the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 |
| 50/11 | Multilingualism |
| 50/206 | Pattern of conferences |
| 51/211 | Pattern of conferences |
| 52/214 | Pattern of conferences |